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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN YEMEN

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 924 (1994) of 1 June 1994.

2. The resolution, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to the area as soon as possible to assess prospects for a renewed dialogue among all those concerned and for further efforts by them to resolve their differences. It also requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the situation at an appropriate time, but not later than one week after the completion of the fact-finding mission.

3. On 3 June 1994, I informed the President of the Security Council that I had decided to appoint Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as my Special Envoy and Head of the fact-finding mission to Yemen (S/1994/664). On the same day, the President of the Security Council informed me that the members welcomed my decision (S/1994/665).

4. Mr. Brahimi started his mission on 7 June 1994 at Geneva where I met with him for a briefing session. He was accompanied by a political officer from the Department of Political Affairs and a staff member from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. From 8 to 19 June 1994, the Special Envoy visited Sana'a (twice) and Mukalla. He also travelled to Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan and Egypt.

5. In all his meetings during the visit to the region, Mr. Brahimi expressed the concern of the international community over the deterioration of the situation in Yemen. He reviewed the elements of Security Council resolution 924 (1994), which set up the mandate of the mission, and expressed the wish to listen to the views of all the parties concerned.

II. VIEWS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

6. At every opportunity throughout his visit to Yemen, the Special Envoy emphasized the paramount necessity of agreeing on an immediate cease-fire, as called for in Security Council resolution 924 (1994). Only when a cease-fire became effective would it be possible to expect the resumption of dialogue.

7. At Sana'a, official discussions took place with President Ali Abdallah Saleh and a number of Cabinet ministers led by Dr. Mohammad Said Al-Attar, the Acting Prime Minister.

8. The Acting Prime Minister indicated that despite his country's reservation that the Security Council had discussed the internal situation of his country and that this might set a grave precedent in the history of the United Nations, he nevertheless welcomed the adoption by the Council of resolution 924 (1994) on the situation in the Republic of Yemen. He believed that the resolution had affirmed legitimacy within the framework of the Republic of Yemen and linked the cease-fire with a number of steps that Yemen regarded as an integral part of the resolution.

9. Regarding the cease-fire, the Yemeni side stated that the military option had been imposed on the legitimate authorities by the separatists. A three-day cease-fire was declared on 21 May 1994, even before the Security Council adopted resolution 924 (1994), in the hope that the cease-fire would be a step towards the definitive suspension of hostilities and the beginning of political dialogue. Suddenly, however, the separatists made their declaration of secession within hours of the announcement of the cease-fire.

10. The Yemeni side further stated that it required guarantees from the Security Council that the cease-fire would not be exploited by the separatists and their supporters to consolidate the illegitimate separatist State and strengthen themselves with funds and weapons or to allow them to engage in political manoeuvres with a view to securing the recognition of certain States, which the Republic of Yemen would regard as a violation of the Security Council resolution. The Yemeni side also stated that the adoption of a resolution to dispatch observers would be completely unacceptable.

11. Regarding the resumption of dialogue, the Yemeni side expressed its conviction that dialogue was the best way of resolving differences. The other side was not in earnest in engaging in dialogue and was exploiting it for purposes of manoeuvre. The Yemeni side was nevertheless prepared to engage in dialogue in accordance with the following principles:

(a) Respect for constitutional legitimacy;

(b) Rescinding of the decision on secession;

(c) Commitment to the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen;

(d) Compliance with the results of the elections of 27 April 1993;

(e) Incorporation of those combatants under the command of the rebels that remain into the legitimate armed forces, with the same rights and duties as their counterparts;

(f) Surrender of all weapons and military equipment in the possession of the rebels to the legitimate armed forces;

(g) That the dialogue should begin immediately and be completed within five days;

(h) That the dialogue should be conducted in Sana'a with no third party in attendance;

(i) That there should be no participation by the 16 persons against whom indictments have been issued by the Public Prosecutor.

12. The Yemeni side stated that it welcomed the statement made by the Secretary-General concerning the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Yemen and to victims of the war, stressing that the Government of the Republic of Yemen had taken the initiative in this matter and had submitted a request for assistance to the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme at Sana'a and that a number of meetings had taken place in that regard. The Government therefore welcomed any assistance in this domain provided by the United Nations and its organs or by friendly States to the Government of the Republic of Yemen.

13. As agreed with the Government, the Special Envoy also held discussions with a group of political leaders representing 24 political parties, as well as with a group of members of Parliament representing all political parties, led by their Speaker, Sheikh Abdallah Al-Ahmar. Both groups stressed the need to preserve unity at all cost. They agreed, however, that it was necessary and urgent to reach a cease-fire and to restart dialogue, provided it was within the existing constitutional framework.

14. The mission visited Mukalla on 12 and 13 June 1994, where Southern leaders expressed their views on the situation. The Southern leaders presented an analysis of their perspective of the evolution of the situation since the unification of Yemen in May 1990. They explained that soon after unity was achieved in 1990, influential people in the leadership of the former northern part of the country who were opposed to unity, development and modernization, launched an undeclared war on the leaders of the Yemen Socialist Party. After the parliamentary elections of 27 April 1993, the situation became further confused, violence continued unchecked and political and economic life was brought to a halt. They added that more recently, since 27 April 1994, Yemen had been involved in a serious war between the forces of the two former States, which were not integrated with each other after the unification of the country. This was also the case with many other institutions.

15. They expressed deep gratitude to the Security Council and the Secretary-General for their interest in the situation in Yemen and for the adoption of Security Council resolution 924 (1994), and reaffirmed their commitment to the provisions of all six of its operative paragraphs.

16. The Southern leaders attached the highest priority to the observance of a cease-fire. In this connection, they welcomed the declaration of readiness made by Sana'a, as communicated to the Security Council through the Special Envoy, and its proposal that a military observer team should supervise the cease-fire. Since the former Military Commission established shortly before the outbreak of the war included the military attaché of the United States of America, the

military attaché of the Russian Federation and the military attaché of France, representing the European Union, in addition to representatives of the Sultanate of Oman and Jordan and northern and southern military elements, it was necessary, on that basis, to make speedy arrangements to organize the monitoring of the cease-fire by an integrated team capable of managing the task and carrying it out in the best possible manner. The observation team should also include representatives of Africa, Asia and the League of Arab States. Subsequently, consultations can be held on the necessary arrangements for dialogue to begin between the parties concerned without preconditions or reservations

17. They stressed the importance of giving urgent attention to the humanitarian aspect.

18. The Southern leaders suggested the convening of an emergency meeting of the Security Council to adopt deterrent measures against the Sana'a regime.

19. While at Mukalla, the Special Envoy met with a group of political leaders representing 22 political parties and various organizations who expressed their support for Mr. Ali S. Al-Bidh and for the proclamation of the new State made on 22 May 1994. Some expressed the hope that international recognition would be granted to that State. All demanded that the cease-fire be observed and monitored by international observers so that dialogue could begin between the two sides.

III. VIEWS OF THE NEIGHBOURING STATES

20. The Special Envoy also held talks with government leaders in Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The neighbouring States were unanimous in reiterating to the Special Envoy the expression of their deep concern over the current state of affairs in Yemen. They all expressed profound sorrow at the tragic loss of life, the suffering of the people and the destruction of infrastructure and private and public property caused by the war. All stressed that they had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of their neighbours. They also made it clear that this was a serious threat to peace and security in the region and that, consequently, the continuation of the fighting was not acceptable. All leaders were in agreement that political differences could not be resolved by force and that it was up to the people of Yemen, and to them alone, to decide how they should organize their political future.

21. Leaders from Jordan and Qatar were of the view that the preservation of unity, in a form on which the Yemenis would agree, would best serve the interests of Yemen, as well as preserve peace and security in the region. In the other neighbouring States, all leaders reminded the Special Envoy that when unity was achieved between the two Yemeni States, it had been unanimously welcomed and supported by all countries in the region. They reaffirmed their position that it was up to the Yemeni people and their leaders, who were parties to the conflict, to decide for themselves, through peaceful dialogue, whether they would live in a unified State or return to the situation which existed prior to 22 May 1990, when there were two independent States, both of which were

members of the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

22. All Governments in the region expressed the hope that the two parties would speedily comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 924 (1994) and cooperate with the United Nations to attain an immediate cessation of hostilities under adequate control and to resume dialogue.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

23. The Special Envoy and the members of the fact-finding mission paid particular attention to the effect of the hostilities on the civilian population. Immediately after their arrival, they met with the representatives of all the specialized agencies, as well as with representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Special Envoy also raised the issue during his discussions at Sana'a and Mukalla.

24. At Sana'a, a member of the mission from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Serge Tell, held extensive discussions with representatives of governmental departments, foreign embassies, and international and non-governmental organizations that were directly concerned. He travelled to Taiz and Lahej governorates as part of the Inter-Agency Assessment Mission that took place from 13 to 15 June 1994. To complete his information, he was to go to Aden to assess humanitarian needs and to discuss the overall situation with leaders in the South. However, he could not do so because of the security situation in Aden.

25. The report of the Inter-Agency Assessment Mission is therefore incomplete at this stage. However, it includes a section on the situation in Aden based on information obtained from United Nations staff members who were evacuated from the city on 17 June. These reports were supplemented by information received from several international relief organizations. The most important conclusion of the mission is that a major crisis is imminent unless a political solution is found or at least a cease-fire is put into force as soon as possible.

V. ATTEMPTS TO ARRANGE A CEASE-FIRE

26. As indicated earlier, the Special Envoy stressed everywhere the necessity of reaching an immediate cease-fire. Yet, despite the acceptance by both sides of resolution 924 (1994) and six announcements that a cease-fire would come into force, fighting has continued. Indeed, it has intensified around Aden, and, according to some reports, it has spread to areas that had not been affected up to 15 June 1994.

27. After receiving the Special Envoy on 9 June 1994, President Ali Abdallah Saleh announced in Sana'a that a cease-fire would become effective as of 1200 hours local time. However, within hours, fighting erupted again, with each side accusing the other of restarting it.

28. President Ali Abdallah Saleh proposed reviving a Joint Military Commission, which would include Yemeni officers from the two warring parties, as well as officers from Jordan and Oman and the military attachés of France and the United States. However, subsequently, the President proposed that the revived Commission should work without its non-Yemeni members, which would make arrangements to enforce the cease-fire an internal, inter-Yemeni affair.

29. The other side rejected this proposition outright. In a memorandum submitted to the Special Envoy at Mukalla on 12 June 1994, they made a counter-proposal to the effect that a Joint Commission should be formed with all the members of the former one, plus other representatives from Africa, Asia and the League of Arab States.

30. President Ali Abdallah Saleh conveyed to the Special Envoy that the proposal made by the other side was not acceptable, but he said he would be willing to accept the participation of the non-Yemeni members of the old Commission. He would even accept the addition of two more countries: Syria and a country from the Maghreb - Algeria or Morocco, for example.

31. While the distance between the two parties was still considerable, there appeared to be enough common ground to try to work out a compromise that would ensure that a cease-fire would enter into force and that a mechanism would be established to stabilize the situation. After intensive consultations and a second visit to Sana'a, it was agreed that the two sides would send emissaries to meet the Special Envoy at Cairo and possibly to meet face to face to discuss a cease-fire and the mechanism to supervise it.

32. The Special Envoy received the two sides successively on 19 June 1994. The Government in Sana'a had earlier suggested that the meeting should be between the three political parties that had been members of the Coalition Government since the general elections in 1993. Although it was made abundantly clear to them that this suggestion was not acceptable to the other side, they nevertheless sent to Cairo a delegation composed of the two political parties that were still in the Government of Sana'a: the General People's Congress and the Yemen Reform Grouping. Consequently, there was no face-to-face meeting between the two sides.

33. It proved equally impossible to agree on a mechanism to supervise the cease-fire, as the delegation from Sana'a insisted that any arrangement had to be made within a purely intra-Yemeni national context.

34. On 24 June 1994, the Secretary-General received, successively, Mr. Abdel-Karim Al-Iryani and Mr. Haydar Al-Attas. He again expressed his concern that the cease-fire called for in resolution 924 (1994) was not being observed and that the fighting around Aden had, in fact, intensified. He very strongly urged an end to the fighting and the creation of a mechanism to supervise the cease-fire as a prelude to the resumption of dialogue.

35. On 25 June 1994, Sana'a announced that a cease-fire would enter into force as of midnight that same day. Mr. Al-Attas published a communiqué indicating that his side would stop firing if the other side would do the same. It was also agreed that on the following day, 26 June, provided the cease-fire held,

the Special Envoy would resume discussions with the two sides, represented by Mr. Ali Al-Iryani and Mr. Al-Attas, to seek agreement on the mechanism to supervise the cease-fire. Unfortunately, once again the cease-fire did not hold for more than a few hours.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

36. It is a matter of serious concern that almost four weeks after the adoption of resolution 924 (1994), fighting has not stopped in Yemen and that repeated commitments to the cease-fire have not been honoured.

37. It is particularly worrisome that the inhabitants of the city of Aden continue to be subjected to so much suffering. Indeed, fighting has intensified in the course of the last few days and the number of casualties has risen dramatically. There is no electricity most of the time in most parts of the city and the shortage of water is serious. Hospitals lack both equipment and medical supplies to cope with the situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross and international aid organizations find it more and more difficult to carry on with their admirable work.

38. Very little is known about fighting elsewhere in this vast territory. But this is a real war, with all the dire consequences of war everywhere: human casualties, suffering of innocent people and destruction of infrastructure and public and private property.

39. Understandably, neighbouring countries are following developments in Yemen with growing concern. Past history and recent experience illustrate that a crisis such as the one in Yemen tends to affect security and stability in the whole region. It is therefore in the interest of all concerned that the conflict be contained and resolved as quickly as possible.

40. There is general consensus that:

(a) A cease-fire is necessary and urgent;

(b) A mechanism to supervise the cease-fire is also necessary and should be organized. Indeed, both sides have already agreed on some aspects of this mechanism, namely, that it should be a joint commission, that it should include a number of officers from both sides and that representatives from Jordan and Oman as well as the military attachés of France and the United States in Sana'a would take part. However, there are still differences between the two sides concerning representation from other countries;

(c) Once the cease-fire is effective, dialogue should restart with the help of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, at a venue to be agreed upon.

41. My Special Envoy was well received by the two parties, which have repeatedly expressed support for his mission. I am grateful to them, and I earnestly call upon them to translate this goodwill into active cooperation with Mr. Brahimi.

42. I should also like to take this opportunity to express to the leaders of all neighbouring countries my deep appreciation for their cooperation with me and my Special Envoy. Their cooperation will be invaluable for the continuation of our efforts in connection with this crisis.

43. The call made in resolution 924 (1994) concerning the delivery of arms to the warring parties needs to be stressed. Enough harm has been done by the ample stocks already available to them, and surely better use can be made of the resources Yemen possesses or has access to.

44. The most urgent task ahead is to put an end to the fighting and to start providing urgent aid to the people who so badly need it, particularly, but not only, in the city of Aden.

45. The Security Council may wish, at this stage, to make abundantly clear that the present state of affairs cannot be tolerated, that the cease-fire must now enter into force without delay and that the two parties must be urgently requested to cooperate with my Special Envoy in the establishment, within the next few days, of the mechanism to supervise the cease-fire. Should the parties so desire, I would be prepared to recommend to the Council the deployment of United Nations military observers, once a cease-fire is in place. These United Nations observers could be supplementary to whatever supervisory mechanism might be agreed upon between the parties. The Council may also request the two parties to start immediately thereafter a dialogue which my Special Envoy could organize in consultation with them at a mutually agreed neutral venue, possibly Geneva.